



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### HALF OF AMERICA FISHES, HUNTS, OR ENJOYS WILDLIFE, 1980 NATIONAL SURVEY REVEALS

#### FISH AND WILDLIFE A \$40 BILLION BUSINESS

One of the every two adult Americans participated in some form of outdoor activity involving fish and wildlife in 1980, a national survey by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has revealed.

Nearly 100 million people engaged in one or more forms of wildlife-related recreation and spent almost \$40 billion to pursue their favorite sports or enjoy their other outdoor hobbies, making fish and wildlife truly "big business" in America today.

Included in this total are more than 42 million Americans age 16 and older who fished in 1980 and 17 million adults who hunted that same year. Eighty-three million Americans observed or photographed wildlife during outings or attracted birds and other wildlife to their homes--over 30 million of whom also fish and hunt.

The typical adult American sportsman who fishes or hunts is likely to be male (71 percent), white (92 percent), under age 35 (52 percent), earn under \$30,000 (71 percent), and live in a rural area or town under 50,000 population (76 percent).

These preliminary results from the 1980 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation were announced today by the Fish and Wildlife Service at the 47th annual North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference in Portland, Oregon. The 1980 survey is the sixth in the series of national surveys conducted by the Service every 5 years since 1955.

This survey is one of the major tools by which natural resource managers and planners better understand the characteristics and preferences of people who use fish and wildlife resources. Through a national report, as well as State-by-State breakdowns that are provided to individual fish and game agencies, managers are provided information that helps them in meeting the demand for increased fish and wildlife recreational opportunities. The recreational equipment industry also uses the survey data as part of its national marketing studies to understand trends in outdoor recreation.

Although final survey results will not be available to the press and public until late May, when the national report will be published, the Service released highlights from its preliminary data at today's meeting, attended by representatives of many of the major Federal, State, and private natural resource organizations in North America.

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Among the 42 million fishermen 16 years and older, freshwater anglers outnumbered saltwater sportsmen by a three-to-one margin (36 million vs. 12 million), although a substantial number enjoy both forms of fishing. Fishermen spent over \$10 billion on equipment, transportation, food and lodging, and licenses and fees and devoted 858 million days to their fishing trips. The survey also showed that there are an additional 12 million young fishermen between the ages of 6 and 15.

The most popular sport among the 17 million hunters 16 years and older was small game hunting (12.4 million people), followed closely by big game hunting (11.8 million), migratory bird hunting (5.3 million), and other types of hunting (2.6 million). Hunters spent \$5.5 billion and reported 330 million days afield in 1980. The survey revealed that an additional 2 million young people under age 16 are hunters.

In addition to the major expenditures they made to pursue fishing and hunting, sportsmen also spent nearly \$9 billion for related items used in conjunction with their sport, such as boats, trailers, and cabins.

Eighty-three million Americans (30 million sportsmen and 53 million people who neither fish nor hunt) reported taking trips to observe or photograph wildlife or engaging in such activities around their homes. (Not included in this total are an additional 10 million adults who were not active wildlife enthusiasts yet, nevertheless, indicated that the presence of wildlife added enjoyment to their lives.) These Americans spent \$14.8 billion on travel and equipment and supplies ranging from binoculars and cameras to birdseed.

Survey data show that a majority of sportsmen also pursue wildlife activities other than traditional fishing and hunting. Fully 65 percent of all fishermen and hunters engage in forms of "non-consumptive" wildlife recreation, such as photography and wildlife observation.

"This survey continues to show that fishing, hunting, and other wildlife related activities appeal to many types of Americans," says Robert A. Jantzen, director of the Fish and Wildlife Service. "In addition, it shows how broad an appeal fish and wildlife have for many different groups in our society.

"There is a tremendous hunger out there for these activities, as the 1980 survey data will document when it is released to the public later this year. This is a challenge that fish and wildlife managers in the Federal and State governments must meet, and tools such as this survey are one of the ways we have to predict and understand such trends," Jantzen said.

The 1980 survey cost \$7 million and was performed for the Service by the U.S. Bureau of Census. It was financed with proceeds from excise taxes on hunting and fishing equipment that sportsmen and other outdoor recreation enthusiasts buy. Under Federal sport fishing and hunting programs popularly known as the "Dingell-Johnson" and "Pittman-Robertson" programs, tax revenues are returned to the States to finance fish and wildlife restoration projects, as well as to fund efforts such as the national survey and its State-by-State tallies.

In the first phase of the 1980 survey, 116,000 households in the United States were surveyed by telephone for general information on participation in fishing, hunting, and nonconsumptive activities related to wildlife. A second phase, involving personal interviews of 35,000 people, gathered detailed information on participation and expenditures.

The 1980 figures appear to show a slight decrease in the total numbers of fishermen and hunters in the Nation since the 1975 survey. Service analysts cautioned, however, that the dip reflects a refinement in survey technique rather than a national downward trend. (In 1975, when statistics were compiled for sportsmen age 9 and older, there were 53.9 million fishermen and 20.6 million hunters. In 1980, the survey showed 51.2 million fishermen and 19.3 million hunters in the same age bracket, an apparent drop.) However, the earlier survey was based on a 37 percent response rate among people who were polled by mail questionnaire. The 1980 survey achieved a 95 percent response rate and its data were gathered through detailed personal interviews.

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Note to editors: Today's preliminary data will be followed by publication of the 1980 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation report in late May. Its availability in limited quantities to the press will be announced at that time, as will sales information for members of the general public who want to purchase the report through the Superintendent of Documents. Until analysis of the survey data is completed and the report published, no further press announcements will be made.